

Abstract of the Disclosure

Methods and apparatus for treating disc herniation provide a conformable device which assumes a first shape associated with insertion and a second shape or expanded shape to occlude the defect which typically follows partial discectomy. The device may take
5 different forms according to the invention, including patches size to cover the defect or plugs adapted to fill the defect. In a preferred embodiment, however, the device is a gel or other liquid or semi-liquid which solidifies to occlude the defect from within the body of the disc itself. In another preferred embodiment, a mesh screen is collapsed into an elongated form for the purposes of insertion, thereby minimizing the size of the requisite incision while
10 avoiding delicate surrounding nerves. Such a configuration also permits the use of instrumentation to install the device, including, for example, a hollow tube or sheath adapted to hold the collapsed screen, and a push rod to expel the collapsed device out of the sheath for use in occluding the disc defect. A device according to the invention may further include one or more anchors to assist in permanently affixing the device with respect to the defect.